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CURRENT SUPPORT MEMORANDUM

POLISH AIRLINE STRESSES INTERNATIONAL ROUTES

OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND REPORTS

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

This report represents the immediate views of the originating intelligence components of the Office of Research and Reports. Comments are solicited.

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A recent estimate by A. Skala, Director of Polish Airlines LOT*, forecasts a reduction in the number of passengers on domestic routes for 1958 by 60,000 and an increase in the number on international routes by 16,000. 1/ The route network also has been radically changed. While international flights accounted for only 30 percent of route kilometers between 1947-1957, September 1958 schedules reveal an increase to 84 percent. (See maps) The following table gives a graphic presentation of the results of the 1956 policy adopted by the Parliamentary Committee for Transportation to "modernize" air transport. 2/

	<u>1957</u>	<u>1958</u> (Estimated)
Number of passengers <u>3/</u>		
Total	<u>223,450</u>	<u>179,450</u>
Domestic	179,380	119,380
International	44,070	60,070
Length of network <u>4/</u> (kilometers)		
Total	<u>15,495</u>	<u>21,550</u>
Domestic	4,449	3,476
International	11,046	18,074

Efforts to increase airline earnings may play a chief role in these changes. The Director of LOT indicated that a decline in domestic passenger traffic was anticipated when higher fares were introduced in November 1957, and since foreign exchange is earned by international operations, they have expanded to the detriment of local service.

The growth in international routes including the flights to London and the Middle East, have been made possible by aircraft of better performance. The US-UK-Satellite air policy and COCOM restrictions which denied Western-built aircraft to the Bloc until last year resulted in Poland's complete dependence on aircraft of Soviet manufacture. The Li-2, the Il-12, and the Il-14, standard aircraft for the airlines of the Bloc, carried only 18-24 passengers and were not suited to long international flights. In 1957, however, LOT acquired three US-built Convair 240 aircraft from the Belgian airline Sabena, and put the 40-passenger aircraft into use on international flights. There now are rumors that the Poles might buy Viscount turboprop transports, 5/ or Comet four-engine jets from the British, or might receive Il-18 turboprop transport from the USSR, all designed essentially for longer flights.

Moreover, Poland, a member of ICAO** since its inception and LOT a long-standing member of IATA*** are able to fully exploit the aggressive expansion policy pursued by air carriers of the Sino-Soviet Bloc from 1955 to 1958. Polish civil aviation has been able to profit

* Polskie Linie Lotnicze

** International Civil Aviation Organization.

*** International Air Transport Association.

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from advantages offered by membership in these international organizations not available to other bloc countries with the exception of Czechoslovakia which is also a member.

Since the statements concerning LOT's future appeared in the Soviet Civil Aviation magazine and in a symposium of bloc air carriers it is likely that the plan meets with the approval of the USSR. Conversely the emphasis on international flights, particularly outside bloc airspace are part of the general picture of bloc penetration of the West in the field of civil aviation.

Analyst:

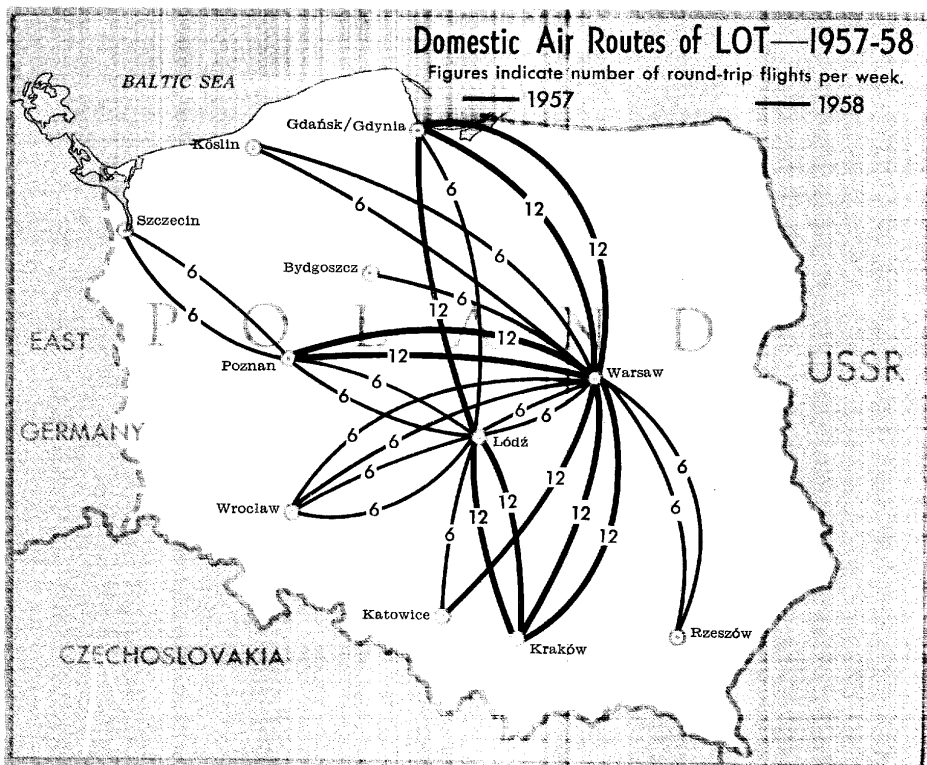
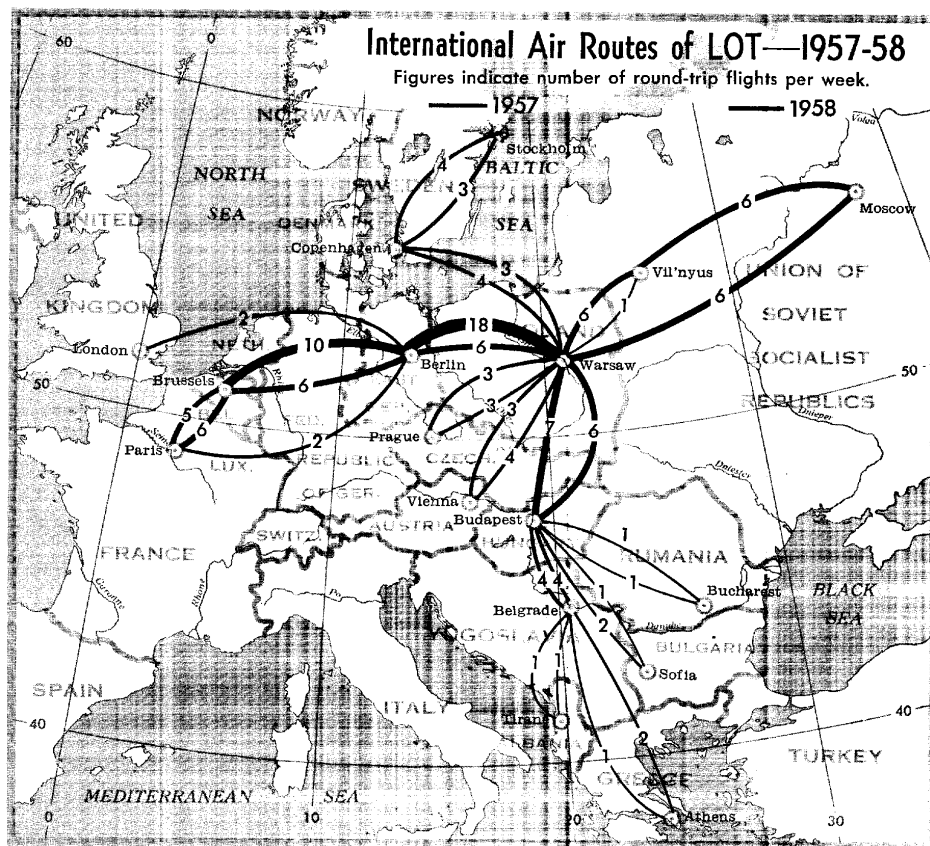
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Sources:

1. Grazhdanskaya Aviatsiya, Jan 58, p. 12-16. U.
2. Air, AFCIN - IAI, IR, 20 Dec 57, The Polish Airlines. U.
3. Grazhdanskaya Aviatsiya, Jan 58, p. 12-16. U.
4. ABC World Airways Guide, Sept 57. U.
ABC World Airways Guide, Sept 58. U.
5. Lloyd's List and Shipping Gazette, 28 Aug 58, p. 2. U.

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